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Maine Developments, June & July 1963

Maine Department of Economic Development

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MAINE DEVELOPMENTS

Department of Economic Development

State House

Augusta, Maine

Vol. 2 No. 6

June-July, 1963

RENEWAL PROGRAM PRAISED

Maine's Urban Renewal efforts were praised in an article by Charles J. Horan, regional director, Urban Renewal Housing and Home Finance Agency in a recent Maine Town and City Manager's Association newsletter:

"You have an important advantage in Maine that I would like to mention here — that is the assistance accorded by your state government in the urban renewal process.

"The Maine State Department of Economic Development has become an increasingly potent force in aiding communities in their urban renewal undertakings, in the development of their workable programs and in administering the Federal-State urban planning assistance program."

"As you know, urban planning assistance provides for Federal grants made through state, metropolitan or regional planning agencies for the financing of sound planning, and for the orderly growth and development of urban areas."

Maine presently has 14 established Urban Renewal Authorities, ranging in location from Fort Fairfield to Sanford, and another ten authorities in the pre-planning stage.

BATES HEAD ELECTED

A. Phillip Goldsmith, Bates Manufacturing Co. president, has been elected chairman of the executive committee of the board of directors of Elgin National Watch Co., Elgin, Ill. Goldsmith is a director of Aero-Flow Dynamics, Inc., of New York and chairman of the board of Bates Fabrics, Inc., a subsidiary of Bates Manufacturing Co., with plants in Lewiston and Augusta, Maine.

Bates, at 113 years, is one of Maine's oldest industries, and one of its most successful. It has approximately 4000 employees in the two Maine cities, with an annual payroll of close to \$14 million.

Good Luck, Lloyd

When this edition of *Maine Developments* hits the street Lloyd K. Allen will be terminating his service as Commissioner of the Maine Department of Economic Development.

"Lloyd," the name by which he was known and liked by literally thousands of municipal officers, development agency members, industrialists and business people of Maine, will be enroute to Oklahoma to become Director of that state's Department of Commerce and Industry. He was not a candidate for re-appointment to a four-year term as Commissioner of DED.

An extremely active man, Lloyd Allen averaged a good several thousand miles of annual travel by automobile throughout Maine to promote development of its areas and industries and far more than that by plane and otherwise to many other states to

Governor John H. Reed turned the earth to break ground for the second Maine plant of a company whose founder was a Maine native a century and a half ago. The 46,000 square-foot plant of Bird & Son, Inc., is expected to employ 30 to 40 persons when it begins manufacture of corrugated shipping cases in Waterville Industrial Park in November.

The company's total employment is approximately 3,500 in plants in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Louisiana, Illinois, South Carolina and New Jersey. Its diversified products range from building and roofing materials to paper products. Annual sales are in excess of \$75 million.

Financing of the Waterville plant was by Maine banks with a long-term first mortgage loan for more than \$200,000 insured by the Maine Industrial Building Authority. Maine Factories, Inc., Lewiston, is the builder. Bird will lease the building from the Waterville Industrial Development Corp.

The Bird plant will be the third to be located in Waterville's six-year-old industrial park of 85 acres just off Interstate Highway 95. Keyes Fibre Company occupies a speculative building under a 20-year lease. Another building is in use as a terminal by Fox & Ginn, Inc., a trucking firm.

MAINE NATIVE

The founder of Bird & Son, George Bird, was a native of Union, Maine, who started a paper manufactory in Massachusetts in 1795. The company opened a shoe box manufacturing plant in Auburn in 1944, moved to a larger plant in Lewiston ten years later and is still there.

In welcoming the company to its new plant Governor Reed praised the efforts of

New Plant Welcomed

the Waterville Area Industrial Development Corporation and its president Russell M. Squire, Waterville Mayor Cyril M. Joly, Jr., the Maine Industrial Building Authority, the DED and others who participated in the transaction.

In announcing plans for the new plant Bird's president, Ralph A. Wilkins said: "This will enable us to offer additional service to present users of corrugated boxes in Maine and at the same time reflect our confidence in the industrial growth and future development of the State of Maine."

To which Governor Reed replied "I am grateful for this expression of confidence in our future, especially from a man of Mr. Wilkins' stature in the world of industry. I assure him that we have an equal confidence and interest in the growth and future development of his company."

"Bird & Son will grow in — and with — Maine."

ECLIPSE

The number of housing reservations made by persons coming to Maine specifically to view the total eclipse of the sun July 20 is not yet known, perhaps never will be. But the University of Maine had reservation requests for nearly 1000 professional and amateur scientists, long in advance of the scheduled date. The requests came from as far away as Texas, and from Canada, Scotland and Italy.

The DED advertised the spectacle far and wide via newspaper, radio, and television releases and brochures by the hundreds of thousands.



(Continued on Page Four)

From a Little House

There's a title to the composite photograph reproduced on this page: "Never estimate the potential of a young company by the house it occupies."

Twenty-nine years ago a new company began manufacturing shoes in the wooden building in the center of the picture, one of a cluster of dreary dwellings on Bangor's Hancock Street. One by one the houses were levelled to make room for the expanding company. Now, even the wooden building in the picture is gone.

Where once these homes stood is a paved parking area for 600 employees and the three-story brick plant of one of the most highly automated and efficient shoe factories in America — Viner Bros., Inc. Women's and children's casals produced here are sold in some 5000 stores throughout the nation.

And even as you read this, work is going forward toward the opening in August of a Viner branch plant in Presque Isle, more than 150 miles north of Bangor, up where Aroostook County leans against the international boundary to neighbor with Canada, across the line.

FAMILIAR PATTERN

Familiar designs are repeated again and again in the tapestries which record the histories of business concerns. Every such history begins with a vision, a dream. Whether the dream materializes depends upon how frequently such figures as imagination, versatility, perseverance and common, ordinary, plain hard work are woven into the pattern.

All of these things were provided in generous measure by Harry Viner, first of the family to get into the shoe business, in the year 1905. He had his dreams, Harry Viner did, but it is doubtful whether he ever envisioned anything quite like the industry which has been built by his sons, William and Leo.

As a matter of fact, Harry Viner got into the shoe business through the back door. He sort of sidled in, so to speak. Not a robust man, Viner had been compelled to give up jobs in a pottery and a foundry because the physical demands were too great. So he paid a cobbler \$5.00 to teach him the shoe repair trade, then opened a one-man shop in his house.

In addition to custom repairing he bought used shoes, which he repaired or rebuilt and sold to used clothing stores. These shoes sold so well at from \$1 to \$2 a pair that he hired a shoemaker full time to help keep up with the demand. This was his first employee and the occasion brought the first faint glimmerings of the dream — a manufacturing plant with, perhaps, "as many as 200 dinner pails."

This dream began to materialize in 1924, some 20 years after the start of the one-man cobbler shop, when Viner went into partnership to manufacture shoes with Pinchos Medwed, in the little old wooden house shown in the picture.

There followed ten busy, happy years for Harry Viner, during which he saw the firm prosper and expand. Upon his death in 1934 the Viner family bought Medwed's stock and Pinchos Medwed went on to start another business which today is the successful Medwed Footwear, Inc. of Skowhegan.

EXPANSION BEGINS

With young blood and a new name, Viner Bros., Inc., the company continued to prosper. In 1956 a program of expansion and modernization began which has cost up to this time a total of approximately three-quarters of a million dollars. The capacity of the plant has been increased by 60 per cent and the production time reduced by over half. Where formerly it required 20 days to put a pair of shoes through the 120-150 operations, today only seven days elapse between the cutting room and the shipping room.

This speed-up was accomplished by a reduction in the non-productive time between operations. Viner's was the first shoe factory in America to import from Germany a Durkott conveyor adapted especially for the shoe business. The company employs two production engineers. It utilizes time and motion study engineering, has an IBM installation and an integrated personnel program.

Shoe executives have come from as far as St. Louis to learn about modernizing from the Viner's plant in Bangor, Maine.

By 1956 the company had 640 employees and it looked as if they had it made. But within a year a customer who had taken

more than half the Viner production opened a plant in Puerto Rico to make his own shoes. By 1958 Viner Bros. was down to a scant 300 employees. The pace of modernization of the plant was stepped up and an intensive sales program instituted.

Today 20 salesmen travel the country over, moving the output of 6500 pairs of shoes per day through retailers everywhere. Employment is back up to 600, with an annual payroll of \$1,500,000.

JOB FOR HANDICAPPED

One thread which appears consistently in the Viner pattern is employment of the handicapped. Perhaps Harry Viner's frail physique gave him a special understanding of the problems of the handicapped. One of his first employees was a deaf mute and there have been as many as 50 of these employed by the company at one time. The Viner's have cooperated with the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Department of Education, placing persons with handicaps of many kinds in work which they can do.

William C. Viner, company president, says these people do their work as well or better than those without handicaps. And they are likely to be steadier, more loyal employees. Upon his recommendation the handicapped have been employed in several other plants in Maine and elsewhere.

"Bill" Viner, as most of his employees call him, has been chairman of the Advisory Committee on Industrial Development in Bangor ever since its inception. When it appeared that yet another expansion of Viner Bros. was necessary he sought to locate the new plant in his home city. However, a labor survey by the Maine Employment Security Commission indicated that there were not enough people in the Bangor area interested in shoe factory employment to enable another plant to operate.

ANOTHER EXPANSION

Viner brought his problem to DED.

"I'm not too particular where I locate our new plant," he told Industrial Representative Raymond W. Curtis, "so long as it fulfills three requirements. It must be a town that really wants an industry. There must be a labor supply. And there must be an adequate building already in existence."

(Continued . . .)



GOOD MAINE LABOR

Union workers in Maine place job security ahead of extra benefits to be gained by strikes according to an article, "Organized Labor in Maine," in the June issue of Maine Business Indicators, published by the Center for Economic Research at Bowdoin College.

The article is based upon an Honor Thesis in Economics written by Kelvin L. Taylor of Brunswick, a June cum laude Bowdoin graduate. His thesis provides statistics to back up the best selling point DED has to bring new industry to Maine — the excellence of our labor force.

With the exception of the year 1955, when severe textile strikes occurred in Maine, this state has recorded a percentage of time lost through work stoppages which is below the national average — often far below. The percentage of work time lost in this fashion in 1961, for instance, was 0.01 per cent for Maine; 0.14 for the United States.

Taylor listed among major factors in keeping the number of strikes in Maine down: "the long history of unionism in the state," "the character of union leadership" and "the pattern of slow economic growth in the state."

Union membership totals about 70,000 in Maine, with about 57,000 affiliated with the AFL-CIO. About one out of four Maine non-agricultural workers is a union member. The average for the United States is about one in three.

BLANKETS

A Defense Department contract to weave 144,720 olive green wool blankets has been awarded to Sutton's Mills, Sanford. The contract, for \$6.74 per blanket, will maintain employment at the present 400 level during a normally slack season, manager Bert Gilbert said.

Sutton's Mills is part of the Maine Spinning Company's woolen division, a subsidiary of Ames Textile Co., New York.

(Continued)

Of the half dozen or so locations Curtis recommended, Viner chose Presque Isle as the most likely. And Viner leased a former Snark missile hangar in Skyway Industrial Park after negotiations with James K. Keefe, industrial director for the Presque Isle Industrial Council.

An unusual feature of the transaction is that there's scarcely a skilled shoemaker to be had in Presque Isle, although the MESD registered more than the required 125 persons who would like to work in a shoe factory. Viner plans to train his own workers under an ARA program operated by the MESD and the Maine Department of Education.

The Presque Isle plant will be named the Aroostook Shoe Co., and is expected to begin production in August with a production of 1,000 - 1,500 pairs of penny loafers per day and a factory potential of 4000 pairs per day. By producing only one style the plant will not have to close down periodically as do most shoe factories, to change over for new styles.

The new plant will utilize 28,000 square feet of floor space, all on one floor. Wages paid will be about the same as those in Bangor. The Bangor operation will not be affected by the Presque Isle operation, William Viner said.

And so, the little wooden house saw the beginnings of an industry which not only completely changed a neighborhood but outgrew the labor supply of a city.

Maine Products Show

The principal objective of the annual DED-sponsored Maine Products Show is the stimulation of interest and sale of the products of Maine industries. This objective will be stressed at the third annual Show at the Lewiston Central Maine Youth Center August 15, 16 and 17, this year.

But the secondary purpose will not be neglected. With 170-odd Maine products displayed in some 106 booths the public, admitted free, will have the best yet opportunity to learn first hand about the amazing variety and the high quality of the products of Maine labor and management's skill and integrity.

For, second only to the promotion of sales as a Show objective, is the stimulation among Maine citizens of pride in their State and its products. And in previous Shows in Augusta and Bangor vacation travelers from many states, by the thousands, learned that Maine-made products are on a par with its unrivaled recreational facilities.

Next to providing a beneficial industrial climate for its manufacturers it well may be that the most helpful service state government can provide for its private enterprise is nation-wide publicity for the state's products. With this in mind a special effort has been made to induce writers and editors of national trade and financial papers and magazines to attend the Show.

22 WRITERS

Twenty-two of these, nearly three times the number of last year, have signed up to cover the Show for their respective publications. They will receive the full red carpet treatment, with a special preview of the Show, receptions, luncheons and tours of Maine industries and regions in which they

express interest, by boat, plane, bus and private automobile. No effort will be spared to assist them in getting material for their articles about Maine and its industries.

The types of industrial plants to be toured include woodworking, pulp and paper, shoes and leather, electronics, food processing, textiles, metals fabrication.

The Maine Purchasing Agents Association will maintain quarters at the Show to discuss business with exhibitors and others and government procurement officers will be present to discuss contracts and services for Maine firms with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Small Business Administration, General Services Administration, NASA, Defense Supply Agency and Department of Commerce.

HOURS

The Show will be closed to the public during the morning hours to provide opportunity for exhibitors to discuss business with each other and with representatives of the above agencies. The public is welcome from noon to 10 p.m. Thursday and Friday; all day Saturday until 7 p.m.

Clarence McKay, director of exhibits and John P. McCatherin, public relations representative, are the DED members directly responsible for putting on the Show, although most members of the staff will have some part in the work.

Of great help to the sponsors has been a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of the Lewiston-Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce, Bates Mfg. Co., Androscoggin Area Development Corporation, Auburn and Lewiston City Governments, Lewiston Journal, Central Maine Youth Center.

Pretty, What?

In case you've been wondering what's about the gorgeous automobile pictured upon this page read on, reader, read on.

This particular automobile would make a wonderful buy for the right party. It was driven by a dear little old lady in a black bombazine tunic who fussed over it like a mama hen with one duckling. She wouldn't allow smoking in it, ever, and passengers had to remove their rubbers before entering and were required to sit on copies of the *Kennebec Journal*, so as not to wrinkle the upholstery. It never was driven fast enough to squash a bug on the windshield and it was jacked up in a heated garage all winter — under a dust cloth, mind you.

This automobile is strictly a one-owner car and the owner thereof was a school teacher who used it only to drive to work on Sundays. She was a Sunday school teacher.

Just happening to be standing in front of this exceptional vehicle are, on the left, Miss Elaine Ouellette of Lewiston, who happens to be Miss Maine of 1963 and, on the right, Miss Gloria Brody of Jacksonville, who happens to be the reigning queen of the great and sovereign state of Florida.

Miss Florida while here for a boating holiday, graciously employed her talents to help Miss Maine dramatize the attractions which Maine offers vacationers, these days. Miss Maine will return the favor for Florida subsequently.

Pictures like this get used in newspapers all over the country, stimulating the tourist business and mankind generally.



KIDDIE KAMPS

About 25,000 children from everywhere vacation at some 200 Maine boy's and girl's camps, summers. Many return annually as vacationing adults and several round out a good life by retiring in the state they learned to love as children. It's a good "re-peat" business.

FREE SAMPLE

There are two ways to find out about the flavor of a pie; taste it, or consult someone who has et a piece of it.

Now tasting an industrial location is a pretty expensive business, for it involves moving into a new plant and operating it for a time, to get the full flavor of the economic climate of the area.

Many concerns contemplating location of a new plant in Maine prefer, wisely, to consult someone who already has et a piece of it. For these the Industrial Division of DED offers names and addresses of scores of concerns which have operated in Maine for periods ranging from a year or so up to a century and more. These concerns have tasted the pie and will gladly advise serious projects regarding the palatability and nutritiveness of living and doing business in Maine.

Meanwhile, here's a testimonial from the vice president of the Dane-T-Bits Biscuit Company which opened a brand new plant in Auburn near the first of this year, contained in a letter to Thomas F. Halloran, executive director of the Androscoggin Area Development Corporation:

"We are now on a two-shift, five-day week operation and employ approximately 65-75 people in the plant. At the present time we are manufacturing fifteen varieties of cookies and expect to be making at least twenty varieties within the next three weeks. We intend to go on a three-shift basis within the next six weeks and this will bring our total plant employment to something over one hundred.

"We are constantly more gratified that we had decided to locate the bakery in this area. I can say that the employees that we have are more productive and definitely more loyal. It has also been most rewarding that the business climate of this community has been fine for our industry. Everyone that we have done business with has been most helpful and cooperative."

NATURE NOTE

Some lobsters are left handed, also.

AT IT AGAIN

Mr. Bob Elliot's been at it again.

In addition to attending to the routine duties of Director of the Recreation Promotion Division of DED he's managed to get publicity for Maine into two recent issues of national magazines.

Elliot did the photography to illustrate an article in the June issue of *Field & Stream* by Al McClane, Fishing Editor, concerning Grand Lake Stream. And he wrote and illustrated an article for the June issue of *Sports Afield* about the West Branch, Katahdin area.

The two articles mentioned these Maine places: Millinocket, Greenville, Sourdunk Lake, Ripogenus, Pockwockamus (wherever THAT is), Desconeag, Ambajesus, Pemadumcook, North Twin, Quakish, Dolby, Medway, the East Branch, the main Penobscot River, Augusta, Belgrade, Damariscotta, Jefferson, Aroostook County, the Fish River Chain, Munsungun in Piscataquis County, St. Croix River in Washington County and Sebago Lake.

The stories also carried plugs for Maine streamer flies, available transportation and accommodation facilities and referred readers to DED - Maine Publicity Bureau offices in New York, Montreal and Cleveland for further information.

New Plants For Industry

Eleven new industrial buildings costing approximately \$3,700,000 were built or under construction in Maine during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1963, with Maine Industrial Building Authority participation. The MIBA pledges the state's credit to insure first mortgage loans for up to 90 per cent of construction cost.

Since 1958, when MIBA was organized, this agency has participated in construction of 31 new industrial buildings costing more than \$10,200,000. Eleven of Maine's 16 counties have benefited by one or more of these new industrial plants. The number of jobs involved is 2,200.

Insured loans for eight projects costing approximately \$2,300,000 were contracted with Maine savings and commercial banks and a Maine insurance company during the 1962-63 fiscal year. These new buildings will add 263,000 square feet to Maine's industrial building floor space and the eight plants will employ about 450 persons.

MIBA is committed to insure mortgage loans for three additional buildings, when completed. These will cost \$1,400,000 and will total 153,000 square feet of floor space. The plants will employ 500 persons.

PROJECTS LISTED

The eight completed projects are for the following companies: Jordan's Ready-To-Eat Meats, Inc., Portland, meat packing; Joseph M. Herman Shoe Co., Scarborough, men's shoes; Guilford Industries, Inc., Newport, textiles; Lyn-Flex Industries, Inc., Saco, innersoles; Eric W. Kelley Peatmoss Co., Centerville, peat moss; Dane-T-Bits Biscuit Co., Inc., Auburn, cookies; Paragon Glass Works, Inc., Lewiston, Xmas ornaments; Wilfred Goodman Wiping Cloth Co., Inc., Auburn, wiping cloths.

Two of these projects, Lyn-Flex and Dane-T-Bits, are for industries new to the state; two, Herman Shoe and Paragon Glass, are for expansion of industries which have been in Maine less than five years and the remainder provide modern plants for older Maine industries.

Projects under construction are Truitt Bros., Inc., Belfast, men's shoes; Bridgton Knitting Mills, Inc., Bridgton, textiles; and Charles A. Eaton Co., Richmond, men's shoes. The Bridgton project brings a new industry to Maine. The Truitt and Eaton projects provide new, modern plants for older Maine companies.

BUILDINGS BEING BUILT

Maine out-paced the rest of New England in gains in contracts for future construction during the first five months of 1963, the F. W. Dodge Corporation reported. Maine's total of \$45,839,000 represented a gain of 31 per cent over the same 1962 period, while the New England picture showed sharp decreases in all but residential construction.

In Maine, non-residential construction contracts were up 46 per cent over 1962; residential up 14 per cent and public works and utilities up 31 per cent.

For the month of May non-residential construction totalled \$7,419,000, up 98 per cent over May, 1962; residential \$4,765,000, up 15 per cent; public works and utilities \$3,083,000, down less than one per cent.

MAINE CLIMATE

Maybe it would be a good idea to put Mr. Larry Gumbinner on the DED payroll. He has an irrefutable answer to one of the major objections raised by industrial prospects who are hesitant about opening a plant in Maine through a thoroughly groundless fear of transportation tie-ups in winter storms.

Mr. Gumbinner testified to the groundlessness of such fears before a Waterville service club. For a year and a half Mr. Gumbinner commuted between his Waterville home and his New York office desk, week ends. Summer and winter, he was late to work only once. And this was when he was delayed by a snowstorm in New York!

(Continued from page one)

This

TESTIMONIAL OF APPRECIATION

is presented to

the HON. LLOYD K. ALLEN, Commissioner

As an expression of the affection and esteem in which he is held by the personnel of the

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

His administration has provided a most pleasant and rewarding experience for us who have been privileged to work with him.

LLOYD ALLEN'S abundant energy, which he so unstintingly contributed toward the economic development of the State of Maine, inspired his fellow-workers to efforts which won for this Department two National Awards for Excellence, during his tenure.

We deeply regret that the State of Maine is to lose the outstanding abilities of our friend and leader. In testimony of our esteem and our desire that continued success and happiness may attend him always we, the personnel of DED, have hereunto affixed our signatures, at Augusta, Maine, this 26th Day of June, 1963.